

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 009

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 1449

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, US, SU

SUBJECT: GOS PL-480 REQUEST

BEGIN SUMMARY: GOS HAS MADE "SOS" REQUEST FOR PL-480 WHEAT. COUNTRY TEAM URGES WE BE INSTRUCTED RESPOND THAT REQUEST WILL BE ENTERTAINED IN NORMAL FASHION REQUIRING FULL DOCUMENTATION AND JUSTIFICATION OF SUDANESE NEED. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR SUMMONED BY FONMIN USEC MIRGHANI JUNE 18 WHO SAID MINFIN BIHEIRI HAD ASKED HIM TRANSMIT URGENT MESSAGE THAT, DUE TO DECLINE IN WHEAT YIELD BELOW INITIAL ESTIMATES, SUDAN WOULD BE SHORT THIS YEAR ABOUT 150,000 TONS. MIRGHANI NOTED SUDANESE EFFORTS ATTAIN SELF-SUFFICIENCY WERE CONTINUING BUT SAID THAT THIS REPRESENTED "SOS" PLEA FOR 150,000 TONS IN PL-480 WHEAT DURING FY 76. HE SAID BIHEIRI WOULD BE GLAD PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL DETAILS AMBASSADOR MIGHT NEED TO SUPPORT REQUEST.

2. AMBASSADOR REPLIED HE WOULD TRANSMIT REQUEST BUT NOTED THERE WERE TWO HURDLES WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE SURMOUNTED. IN FIRST PLACE, WHILE PL-480 ASSISTANCE ENROUTE LAST SUMMER HAD NOT BEEN DIVERTED, CONFIDENTIAL

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IT HAD BEEN DECIDED LAST AUGUST THAT THEN PENDING SUDANESE

PL-480 TITLE I WHEAT PROGRAM REQUEST WOULD NOT BE APPROVED. WHETHER REQUEST COVERING LATER FISCAL YEAR MIGHT NOW BE DEALT WITH DIFFERENTLY WOULD REQUIRE POLITICAL DECISION IN WASHINGTON. IN SECOND PLACE, EVEN IF FOREGOING ISSUE RESOLVED, MIGHT WELL BE DIFFICULT JUSTIFY OR OBTAIN THAT SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF WHEAT. SECRETARY HAD STRESSED PUBLICLY USG BEST EFFORTS TO MAKE AVAILABLE AT LEAST FOUR MILLION TONS FOOD AID ANNUALLY BUT IT MIGHT WELL BE THAT MOST SURPLUS WHEAT ALREADY COMMITTED. MIRGHANI SAID HE UNDERSTOOD BUT NOTED 150,000 TON FIGURE WAS SIMPLY GOS REQUEST, INDICATING SUDAN WOULD BE SATISFIED WITH LESS. AMBASSADOR SAID SUCH QUESTIONS WULD BECOME IMPORTANT IF THERE PROVED TO BE NO POLITICAL PROBLEM WITH SUDANESE REQUEST, AT WHICH TIME HE WOULD WISH DISCUSS ISSUE IN DETAIL WITH BIHEIRI.

3. COMMENT. EMBASSY SURPRISED BY REQUEST AS WE HAVE HAD NO CONTACT WITH SUDANESE RE PL-480 SINCE LAST YEAR'S PRQOSAL NOT APPROVED, AND HAD ASSUMED, VIEW CONSTANT PUBLIC ASSERTIONS DURING CURRENT FISCAL YEAR, THAT SUDAN AT LAST SELF-SUFFICIENT IN WHEAT. WE WILL OF COURSE DEVELOP FURTHER INFO ON THIS WHOLE SUBJECT SHOULD IT BECOME RELEVANT IN COURSE REQUIRED PROCEDURES TO DOCUMENT AND JUSTIFY GOS REQUEST. AT MOMENT, HOWEVER, QUESTION BEFORE US IS WHETHER PL-480 TITLE I WHEAT PROGRAM REQUEST FROM SUDAN FOR FY 76 MAY BE ENTERTAINED IN NORMAL FASHION. STATE 169610, AUGUEST 3, 1974, MAKES NO MECWION ANY SPECIFIC "HOLD" ON PL-480 HELP BEYOND THE THEN CURRENT WHEAT PROGRAM REQUEST; SO THAT WILLINGNESS ENTERTAIN SUDANESE REQUEST WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT APPEAR RUN COUNTER OUR EXISTING MARCHING ORDERS. FOR BOTH POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN REASONS, IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE IN OUR INTEREST RESPOND FAVORABLY ON THIS POINT, PARTICULARLY SINCE THIS IS FIRST OFFICIAL SUDANESE REQUEST TO USG OF ANY KIND IN OVER A YEAR. GOS FOREIGN EXCHANGE POSITION IS, MOREOVER, EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AND COMMERCIAL IMPORTS WOULD IMPOSE PARTICULAR HARDSHIPS SINCE SUDAN IS ONE OF UN'S POOREST COUNTRIES AND ONE OF THOSE MOST SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY OIL PRICE HIKES. REFUSAL EVEN TO ENTERTAIN REQUEST, ON OTHER HAND, WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE EVOLUTION OF OUR OVERALL BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, WHEREAS LATER FINDING ON TECHNICAL GROUNDS THAT GOS UNABLE MAKE PERSUASIVE CASE WOULD NOT. FOR ALL

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THESE REASONS, COUNTRY TEAM URGES IN STRONGEST TERMS THAT EMBASSY BE INSTRUCTED INFORM GOS THAT WE ARE PREPARED CONSIDER REQUEST UNDER REGULAR PROCEDURES WHICH REQUIRE FULL JUSTIFICATION AMOUNT SOUGHT. EMBASSY WOULD THEN BE IN POSITION GET INTO SPECIFICS IN NORMAL FASHION WITH VIEW DOCUMENTING WHAT AMOUNT OF WHEAT (IF ANY) MIGHT ACTUALLY BE JUSTIFIED FOR CONSIDERATION BY WASHINGTON AGENCIES. BREWER

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Disposition History: n/a
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